

RETAIL PRICES - MARCH QUARTER, 1948.

ALL ITEMS - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers (with the weighted average of the six Capital Cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000) of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for the March quarter, 1948, with figures for December quarter, 1947, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane 1193 (1163), Toowoomba 1199 (1175), Rockhampton 1191 (1163), Townsville 1230 (1201), Bundaberg 1165 (1132), and Warwick 1185 (1164). Increases over the December quarter occurred in all the towns. The rise of 2.6 per cent. in Brisbane was the greatest increase which has occurred since the first quarter of 1942. The only greater rise since the beginning of the recent war was 3.5 per cent. in the last quarter of 1940. Food and groceries were responsible for the greater part of the rise in the total index. The rise of 5.8 per cent. in the prices of those commodities was greater than in any other quarter since the war began, and food and grocery prices are now 34.9 per cent. higher than in 1938-39. Clothing and footwear prices, which are now twice as high as in 1938-39 did not rise as rapidly as food and grocery prices in the quarter just ended, their rise being 2.2 per cent.

The figures show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increase in March Quarter, 1948.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.		From March Quarter, 1947.		From December Quarter, 1947.	
	%		%		%	
Brisbane	38.2		6.2		2.6	
Toowoomba	40.9		5.3		2.0	
Rockhampton	38.3		5.8		2.4	
Townsville	34.9		4.9		2.4	
Bundaberg	38.5		5.2		2.9	
Warwick	44.2		5.5		1.8	

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increase in March Quarter, 1948.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1947.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1947.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1947.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	34.9	5.8	99.5	2.2	21.8	0.1
Toowoomba	44.6	5.4	93.4	-0.1	21.8	0.8
Rockhampton	32.4	5.2	95.9	2.0	22.6	-0.1
Townsville	29.4	5.4	96.0	1.5	20.9	0.3
Bundaberg	32.2	5.4	94.0	2.7	19.5	0.6
Warwick ..	38.1	4.6	99.8	0.9	23.0	-0.2

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for March quarter, 1948 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane, 1039; Toowoomba, 1055; Rockhampton, 1025; Townsville, 1039; Bundaberg, 992; and Warwick, 1004.

From December quarter, 1947, to March quarter, 1948, the "B" Series index showed increases in Brisbane, 3.8%; Toowoomba, 3.8%; Rockhampton, 3.6%; Townsville, 3.6%; Bundaberg, 4.0%; and Warwick, 3.2%.

Increases were noted mainly in bread, meat, eggs, sugar, butter, flour, milk, bacon, jam, soap, and onions.

The rent index increased in Brisbane, 0.1%; and Toowoomba, 0.8%, and remained stationary in all other towns.

Compared with March quarter, 1947, the "B" Series index increased in Brisbane, 7.3%; Toowoomba, 6.4%; Rockhampton, 6.9%; Townsville, 5.8%; Bundaberg, 5.9%; and Warwick, 5.9%.

The rent index showed no movement in Townsville and Bundaberg, but increases were recorded in Brisbane, 0.1%; Toowoomba, 1.2%; Rockhampton, 0.3%; and Warwick, 0.5%.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Clothing and footwear prices rose steadily during the early years of the recent war, until they were about 75 per cent. above their pre-war level by June, 1943. The "Price Ceiling" policy was introduced early in 1943, and the clothing and footwear index declined slightly from June quarter 1943 to September quarter 1945, when it again commenced to rise. Since that date, clothing and footwear prices in Brisbane have risen by 16.4 per cent. The increase in the December quarter, 1947, (3.5 per cent.) was the greatest since the June quarter, 1943, but the rise in the March quarter, 1948, was not so large, being only 2.2 per cent.

Miscellaneous items were nearly 20 per cent. above their pre-war price level by June, 1943, and have remained fairly steady since that date, with the exception of an increase of about 1 per cent. in the March quarter, 1947, due to an increase in the price of tobacco and cigarettes.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in March quarter, 1948, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent to £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba ..	1.	0.	1.	1.	0.	5.	1.	0.	2.		19.	5.
Rockhampton ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	6.		18.	1.	1.	0.	0.
Townsville ..	1.	0.	7.	1.	1.	5.	1.	0.	0.		19.	11.
Bundaberg ..		19.	6.	1.	0.	8.		15.	9.		19.	8.
Warwick ..		19.	10.	1.	0.	3.		17.	5.		19.	11.

BASIC WAGE RATES IN STATE CAPITAL CITIES.

The table on page 3 shows the Retail Price Index Number ("C" Series) for each of the six Capital Cities for the March quarter of 1948 and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State Industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would be required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State Basic Wage in its own Capital City. The differences between these amounts and the State Basic Wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland Basic Wage over each of the other State Basic Wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates - March Quarter, 1948.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) March, 1948.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males.	State Court Basic Wage for Males.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
	Index.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1193	5. 10. 0.	5. 14. 0.	5. 14. 0.	- -
Sydney ..	1270	5. 16. 0.	5. 16. 0.	5. 9. 0.	5. 0.
Melbourne ..	1249	5. 15. 0.	5. 15. 0.	5. 9. 10.	4. 2.
Adelaide ..	1226	5. 11. 0.	5. 6. 0. ^(a)	5. 3. 2.	10. 10.
Perth ..	1221	5. 10. 0.	5. 15. 9.	5. 13. 1.	0. 11.
Hobart ..	1240	5. 12. 0.	5. 12. 0.	5. 7. 9.	6. 3.

(a) No adjustment following the announcement of the March quarter index number had been made when this bulletin was prepared.

The rise in the "C" Series Index Number during the quarter ended March, 1948, caused a "cost of living" addition of 3s.0d. to the Commonwealth Basic Wage in Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth, and 2s.0d. in Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart. The State Basic Wage in Brisbane, and in all other parts of Queensland, was increased by 3s.0d. The State Basic Wage in Perth was also increased by 3s.0d. In Sydney, where the State Basic Wage follows the Commonwealth rate, the increase was 2s.0d., while in Melbourne and Hobart, where no State Basic Wage is declared, State awards largely follow the Commonwealth Basic Wage rates, which increased by 2s.0d. in those cities.

The new Queensland rates were announced by the State Industrial Court on 16th April and became effective from 26th April. The Western Australian rates were announced on 26th April and became effective from that date. The wage rates for New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania became effective from 1st May.

S. E. SOLOMON.

ACTING GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.

13th May, 1948.

Table No. 1.

RETAIL PRICES INDEX.

THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended March, 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				March, 1947.	June, 1947.	Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1154	1123	1125	1136	1163	1193
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1167	1139	1141	1153	1175	1199
Rockhampton	903	861	1156	1126	1129	1142	1163	1191
Townsville ..	1023	912	1195	1172	1169	1181	1201	1230
Bundaberg ..	(b)	841	1129	1107	1108	1111	1132	1165
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	915	864	1157	1127	1129	1140	1165	1195
Warwick ..	914	822	1153	1123	1125	1139	1164	1185

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2.

FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) INDEX - "B" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended March, 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				March, 1947.	June, 1947.	Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.
Brisbane ..	901	852	996	968	966	977	1001	1039
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1016	992	994	1000	1016	1055
Rockhampton	858	837	987	959	964	971	989	1025
Townsville ..	1047	916	1051	1029	1028	1034	1051	1089
Bundaberg ..	(b)	799	955	937	937	938	954	992
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	892	851	999	972	971	981	1003	1041
Warwick ..	841	768	970	948	947	954	973	1004

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3.

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES, BRISBANE.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -	
		Decr., 1947.	March, 1948.			Decr., 1947.	March, 1948.
	d.	d.	d.		d.	d.	d.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.33	6.50	7.00	Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	23.00	34.00
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	4.27	5.32	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	7.75	8.10
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	4.44	4.44	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	14.00	15.00
Sago .. 1 lb.	3.00	17.25	16.17	Steak Rump 1 lb.	11.34	19.00	19.50
Jam (Plum) 1½ lb.	3.02	13.32	15.32	Steak Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	9.00	9.50
Oats - Flaked 1 lb.	3.57	4.60	4.60	Rolled			
Raisins .. 1 lb.	10.57	14.69	14.93	Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	8.50	9.55
Potatoes .. 7 lb.	14.88	10.41	10.41	Mutton -			
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	2.50	3.27	Leg .. 1 lb.	7.75	11.50	12.00
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	8.46	9.24	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	11.50	12.00
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	23.41	23.41	Pork -			
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	16.23	16.23	Leg .. 1 lb.	11.40	15.86	16.00
				Chops .. 1 lb.	11.48	19.36	19.58